

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----014830 281901Z /43

O 281755Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6444
AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE
USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 973
USINT HAVANA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 0917

EXDIS

FOR ARA AMBASSADOR TODMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, MOPS, CU, UR, VE, BR
SUBJECT: BRIEFING OF GOG ON CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA

REF: STATE 075151

1. ON RECEIPT OF REFTEL I IMMEDIATELY CONTACTED MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS RASHLEIGH JACKSON AND USKED FOR AN APPOINTMENT. (JACKSON HAD JUST RETURNED TO GEORGETOWN EARLY MORNING HOURS OF MARCH 24.) HE OFFERED ME AN APPOINTMENT FOR 0915 MARCH 28. (GOG WAS CLOSED DOWN ENTIRELY DURING EASTER WEEK-END, GOOD FRIDAY, HOLY SATURDAY, AND EASTER MONDAY HAVING BEEN DECLARED OFFICIAL HOLIDAYS.)

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2. AFTER INFORMING JACKSON OF THE PURPOSE OF MY CALL AND MAKING POINTS CONTAINED PARA 4 REFTEL REGARDING MAGNITUDE AND APPARENT PURPOSE OF CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA, I ASKED FOR HIS REACTIONS AND WHAT HIS PERCEPTIONS WERE OF CUBAN MOTIVES.

3. REGARDING THE HORN JACKSON BEGAN HIS REMARKS BY RE-CALLING THAT SOMALIA'S LONG-STANDING TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS BEYOND ITS OWN BORDERS WERE WELL-KNOWN. HE CITED A MEETING WHICH HE HIMSELF HAD ATTENDED IN MOGADISHU IN 1974 AND OF THE ALMOST OPEN HOSTILITY APPARENT AT THAT SESSION BETWEEN HAILE SELASSIE AND SAID BARRE AND THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF SOMALIA AND KENYA. THE CURRENT TROUBLES IN THE HORN SHOULD, IN JACKSON'S VIEW, BE CONSIDERED IN THE CONTEXT OF THESE OLD ANIMOSITIES. NEVERTHELESS, HE AGREED THAT THE RUSSIAN/CUBAN INVOLVEMENT, PARTICULARLY THE RUSSIAN DECISION TO SWITCH SIDES AFTER HAVING SUPPLIED SOMALIA WITH IMPORTANT SHIPMENTS OF WAR MATERIEL, WAS CALLOUS AND UNSETTLING. HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT THE ETHIOPIAN FORCES, NOW THAT THE OGADEN HAD BEEN REGAINED, WOULD NOW RESPECT THE COMMITMENT THEY HAD MADE NOT TO CROSS SOMALIA'S FRONTIER AND THAT THE OAU COULD REASSERT ITS INFLUENCE AND ACT TO RESOLVE NOT ONLY THE PROBLEM BETWEEN SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA BUT THE ERITREAN REBELLION AS WELL.

4. AS FAR AS ANGOLA WAS CONCERNED JACKSON IS OF THE OPINION THAT THE UNITA FORCES ARE RECEIVING SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT FROM SOUTH AFRICA THROUGH NAMIBIA. HE REFERRED APPROVINGLY TO THE INITIATIVE OF THE FIVE WESTERN MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL REGARDING A NAMIBIAN SETTLEMENT, AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT IF THIS SUCCEEDED THE PROBLEM OF SOUTH AFRICAN INVOLVEMENT
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MIGHT BE ELIMINATED AND THE NETO GOVERNMENT WOULD THUS NOT HAVE FURTHER NEED OF CUBAN SUPPORT. AGAIN HE EXPRESSED THE GOG'S HOPE THAT THE OAU COULD BRING ITS INFLUENCE TO BEAR ON THIS PROBLEM TOO SO THAT EXTERNAL INFLUENCES COULD BE REMOVED.

5. JACKSON THEN WENT ON TO REFER TO THE UPCOMING NON-ALIGNED COORDINATING COMMITTEE (NACC) MEETING SCHEDULED FOR KABUL MAY 6-10. HE SAID THAT HE EXPECTED THAT CERTAIN PRESSURES WOULD BUILD DURING THE COURSE OF THIS MEETING CRITICAL OF CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA. THIS WOULD CERTAINLY BE THE CASE, SHOULD, AS HE EXPECTS, CUBA RAISE THE QUESTION OF FRENCH MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN NORTHWEST AFRICA AGAINST THE POLISARIO FRONT FORCES. ONCE THE SUBJECT OF FOREIGN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IS RAISED CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE NACC ARE BOUND TO OPEN THE SUBJECT OF THE CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA AND ANGOLA.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 0917

EXDIS

FOR ARA AMBASSADOR TODMAN

6. I ASKED JACKSON AT THIS POINT WHETHER OR NOT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD BE PREPARED UNILATERALLY TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF THE CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN AFRICA DURING THE NACC MEETING. HE RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT THE GOG HAD NOT YET FORMULATED ITS STRATEGY FOR THE NACC MEETING. HE DID, HOWEVER, VOLUNTEER THAT HIS THOUGHTS REGARDING THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE SUBJECT OF CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA WOULD BE RAISED WERE BASED ON DISCUSSIONS HE HAS HAD WITH NAM DELEGATIONS AT THE UN OVER THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS.

7. AS FAR AS ANGOLA WAS CONCERNED I MENTIONED TO JACKSON STORIES WHICH WERE CIRCULATING TO THE EFFECT THAT THE
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CUBANS WERE ACTUALLY ADMINISTERING A FAIR PORTION OF ANGOLA'S NATIONAL TERRITORY AND IN FACT WERE STRIPPING RESOURCES FROM ANGOLA. IF THIS WERE TRUE, I ASKED, WAS

IT LIKELY THAT THE CUBANS WOULD WITHDRAW MERELY ON THE BASIS OF A REQUEST FROM THE NETO GOVERNMENT? JACKSON ADMITTED THAT SUCH REPORTED WERE CURRENT AND HE SAID THAT FOR THE MOMENT ONE COULD ONLY ACCEPT FIDEL CASTRO'S PUBLIC PROMISES THAT CUBAN FORCES WOULD BE WITHDRAWN WHEN THE HOST GOVERNMENTS INVOLVED REQUESTED IT. (PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM, IN THE COURSE OF A CONVERSATION WITH ME IN JANUARY, HAD HIMSELF REFERRING TO THE CUBANS IN ANGOLA AS THE "NEW COLONIALISTS"; I DID NOT, HOWEVER, MENTION THIS EXCHANGE IN MY MEETING WITH JACKSON.)

8. JACKSON IS HOPEFUL THAT THE TIMING OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS--FIRST OF THE NACC IN KABUL IN MAY, THE OAU THIS SUMMER IN KHARTOUM AND THE NAM MINISTERIAL MEETING IN BELGRADE IN AUGUST--WILL RESULT IN GENERAL AGREEMENT WITHIN THE NAM OF THE NECESSITY THAT THE OAU REASSERT ITSELF AS A CREDIBLE ARBITER OF SUCH QUESTIONS AS THE CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN AFRICA. JACKSON VOLUNTEERED THAT THE MORE IMPORTANT CONCERN OBVIOUSLY WAS THE ROLE OF THE SOVIET UNION IN ALL OF THIS. HE IS CONVINCED THAT THE CUBANS WOULD NOT BE IN AFRICA WERE IT NOT FOR SOVIET MATERIEL AND LOGISTIC SUPPORT. AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS ARE THEREFORE OBVIOUSLY WARY OF SOVIET DESIGNS; THESE ARE MORE TROUBLING TO THEM, ACCORDING TO JACKSON, THAN THE MERE FACT OF A CUBAN PRESENCE.

9. I CLOSED THE SESSION BY REITERATING TO JACKSON OUR INTEREST THAT THIS BRIEFING BE KEPT IN CONFIDENCE AND REMINDING HIM THAT WE WERE MAKING THIS DEMARCH AS PART
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OF THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITMENT TO CONSULT WITH HEMISPHERIC GOVERNMENTS ON INTERNATIONAL MATTERS OF CONCERN.
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